



UNITED STATES SENATOR · MICHIGAN
DEBBIE STABENOW
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Sen. Debbie Stabenow Introduces Legislation to Repeal Special Interest Provisions in Homeland Security Bill

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow today unveiled her legislation to strip the special interest provision from the Homeland Security that would protect Eli Lilly and Co. and other vaccine manufacturers from all lawsuits arising from the use of the compound thimerosal.

“When I voted in November for the Homeland Security bill – a vital piece of legislation to protect American families – I vowed that one of my first acts in the new Congress would be to remove these provisions that hurt American families,” Stabenow said. “With this legislation I am keeping that promise.”

Stabenow publicly unveiled her legislation today at a rally with dozens of parents of autistic children, who traveled to Washington, D.C. to protest the same provision targeted by Stabenow’s bill.

That provision, added to the Homeland Security bill by the U.S. House, would protect Eli Lilly and Co. and other vaccine manufacturers from legal claims by parents that thimerosal, a mercury-containing preservative used in several vaccines, may have contributed to a dramatic rise in the incidence of autism being diagnosed in children.

“Instead of just creating a department to protect American families – which it is intended to do – the Homeland Security bill was rewritten to protect the financial interest of an industry that makes higher profits than any other industry in our country,” Stabenow said.

“It certainly appears this special interest provision was added at the last minute as a payback to a powerful political supporter,” she said. “I believe that this provision has no place in the Homeland Security bill, and I believe there is strong bipartisan support for its removal.”

Stabenow introduced her bill to amend the Homeland Security bill on Tuesday, the first day that the legislation was allowed to be introduced in the 108th Congress. The dozen original co-sponsors of the bill include Sens. Carl Levin (D-MI), Tom Daschle (D-SD), Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Mary Landrieu (D-LA), and Christopher Dodd (D-CT).

Groups participating in today’s rally on the Senate grounds included members of the Autism Autoimmunity Project, the Mercury Policy Project, and Safe Minds.